

DETAINEE CHARACTERISTICS, MENTAL HEALTH ITEMS AND BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

Distribution of Charges

If there are more juveniles in custody charged with felonies, it can be presumed that more of these juveniles will require higher security housing. Being able to determine how many juveniles require higher security housing is an important tool for local juvenile detention administrators.

In 2000, 64% of the juveniles held in all types custody were charged with a felony offense. This is just about double the number of juveniles who were charged with a misdemeanor, 36%.

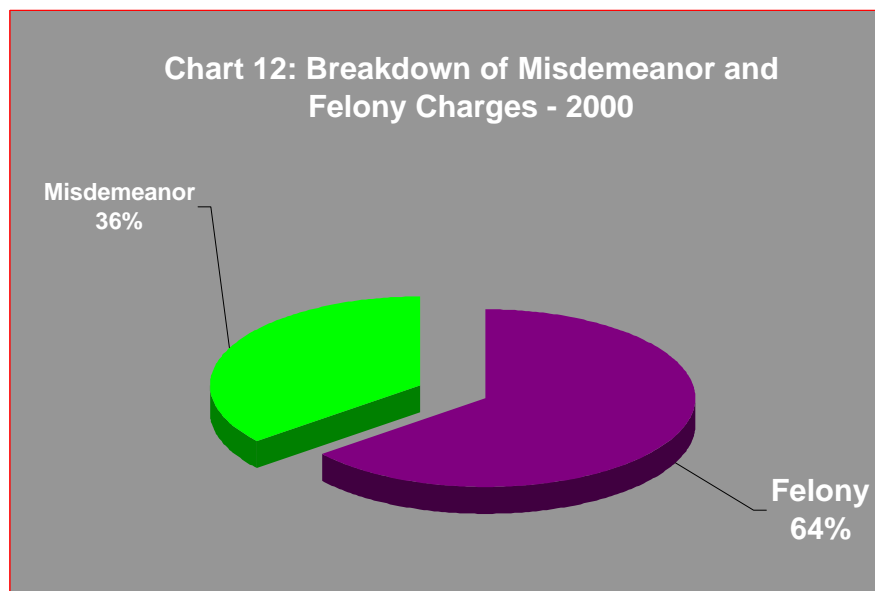
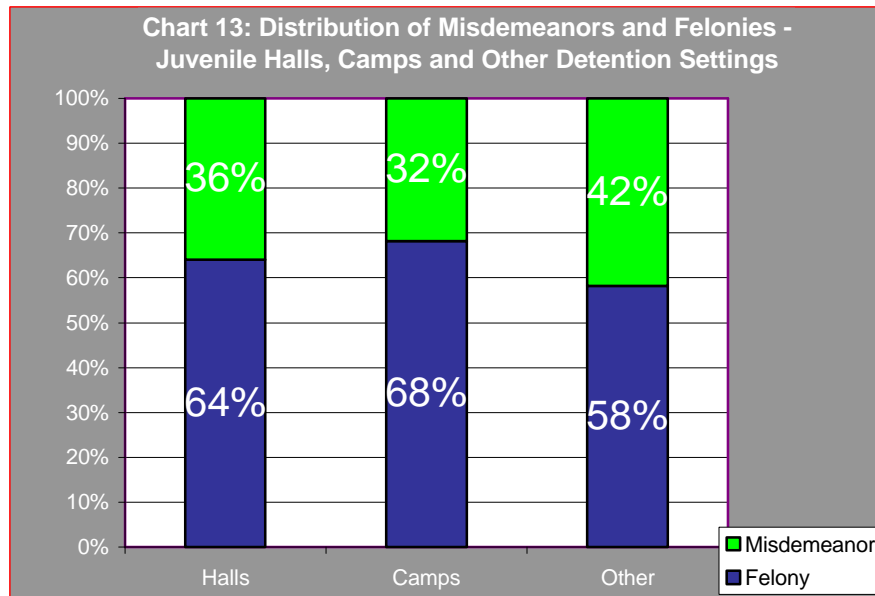


Chart 13 illustrates the distribution of felony and misdemeanor charges among the three detention settings in 2000. As would be expected, the percentage of felonies is slightly lower in “other settings.”



Camps and ranches typically hold the greater number of felony charged inmates, with a percentage of 68% in 2000. This figure decreased slightly from 1999, when 72% of the juveniles held in camps and ranches were charged with a felony.

The figure for juveniles charged with a felony in juvenile hall also decreased slightly from 1999 to 2000; in 1999, this figure was 68%.

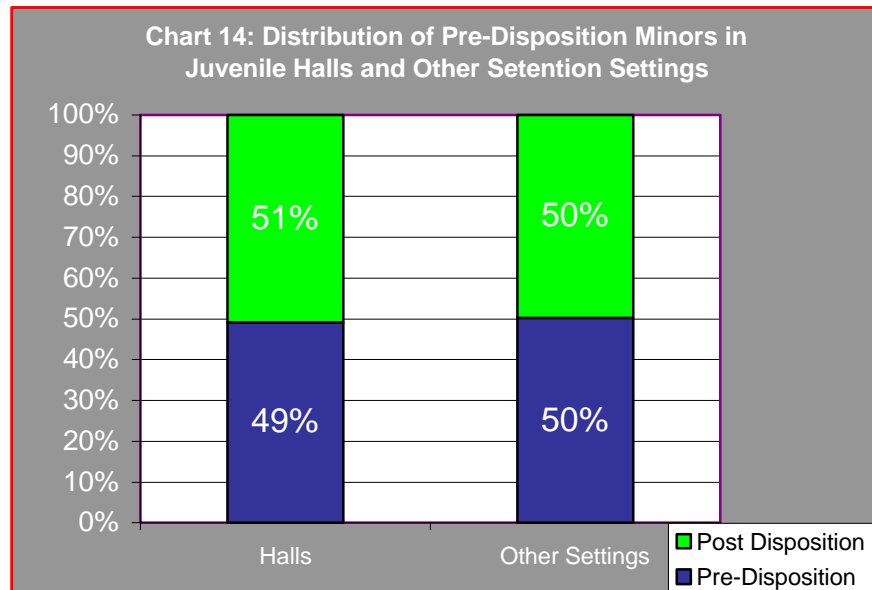
The distribution of charges in “other settings” remained consistent from 1999 to 2000.

Pre-Disposition Minors in Custody

A pre-disposition minor is one who has not yet completed the judicial process. As previously discussed, a juvenile hall is designed for the reception and temporary care of pre-disposition minors or for juveniles serving a court ordered period of detention in the juvenile hall. Chart 14 shows the distribution of pre- and post-disposition minors in juvenile halls and in other detention settings.

Pre-disposition minors housed in juvenile hall require more staff resources due to court appearances and the need to interact with their legal representatives. Additionally, pre-disposition minors housed in juvenile hall may be assigned a higher security classification than adjudicated minors. For these reasons, it is important to follow trends related to the disposition of minors in local custody.

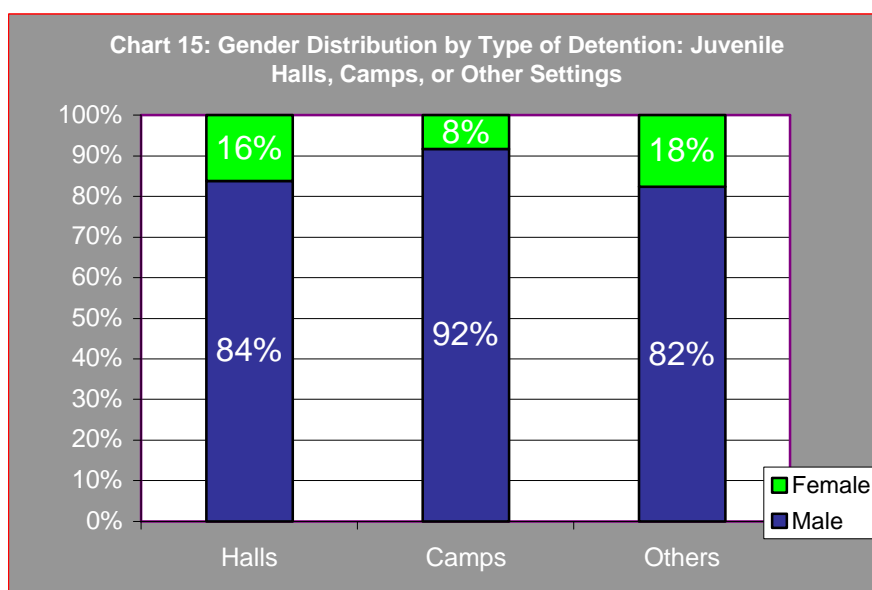
In 1999, slightly fewer than 50% of the minors housed in juvenile halls were pre-disposition; while slightly over 50% of the minors detained in “other detention settings” were pre-disposition. In 2000, this number remained virtually unchanged, with the percentage of pre-disposition minors dropping by 1% to 49%. The figures for “other settings” were identical between the two years.



Gender of Juvenile in Custody

The design of a local juvenile detention facility is in part determined by what percentage of the population is estimated to be male, and what percentage is female. Knowing these percentages is not only helpful for design and program planning, but also assists when identifying trends in the incarceration rates of each gender.

Chart 15 illustrates the gender distributions by detention setting in 2000.



Generally, males make up a greater portion of the population than do females. It is important to note, however, that in juvenile halls, female juveniles increased slightly from 1999 to 2000, from 84% to 85%. This number may seem insignificant now, but could be the indication that a new trend is beginning.

Females in the camp and ranch population decreased by 1% from 1999 to 2000, and by the same percentage in "other settings." These figures will have to be closely watched over the next few years.

Seven Critical Identifiers

The JDPS collects quarterly data on seven critical identifiers that highlight reasons that minors were detained in local facilities. Data on these identifiers were obtained by using a one-day “snapshot” of minors in custody each quarter; however, these critical identifiers are not exclusive. A minor could be reflected in the count of multiple identifiers; for example, a minor may be detained for a 707(b) WIC offense and awaiting transfer to camp. Hence, this minor would be counted in both of the categories. Chart 16 compares how many minors associated by the critical identifiers were in custody on an average day in 1999 and 2000.

<i>Chart 16: Seven Critical Identifiers</i>		
	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>
Juveniles awaiting placement	997	1202
Juveniles awaiting transfer to camp	682	668
Juveniles awaiting transfer to CYA	139	152
Juveniles hospitalized outside detention facilities	47.6	20
Juveniles detained for 707(b) WIC offenses	1,326	1,023
Juveniles found unfit per 707.01 WIC	294	206
Juveniles believed to be illegal/criminal aliens	137	135

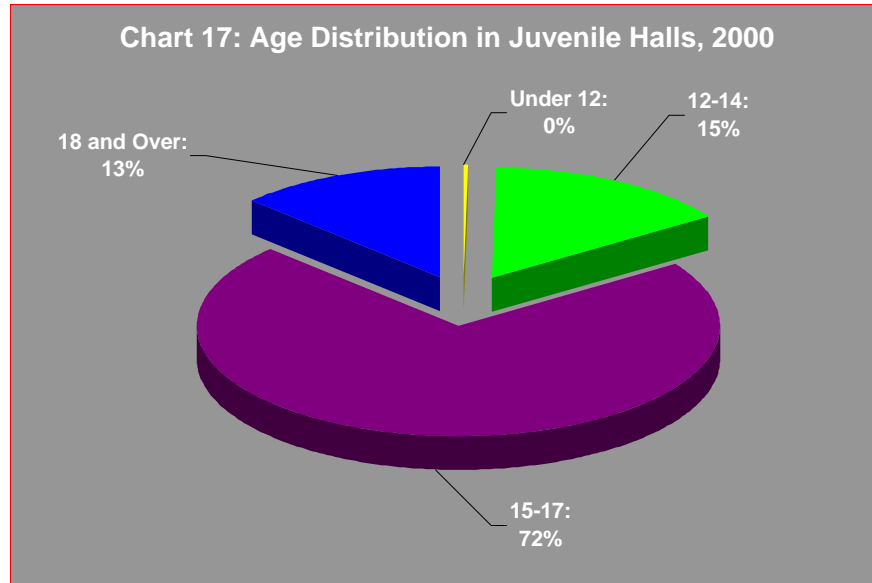
As illustrated, the number of juveniles awaiting placement (i.e. to a group or foster home) increased significantly, by 17%. The number of juveniles awaiting transfer to either a camp or to the California Youth Authority both increased minimally.

Juveniles hospitalized outside the facility decreased by over 50%. The explanations for this decrease could be many, and the BOC will follow this trend in the future.

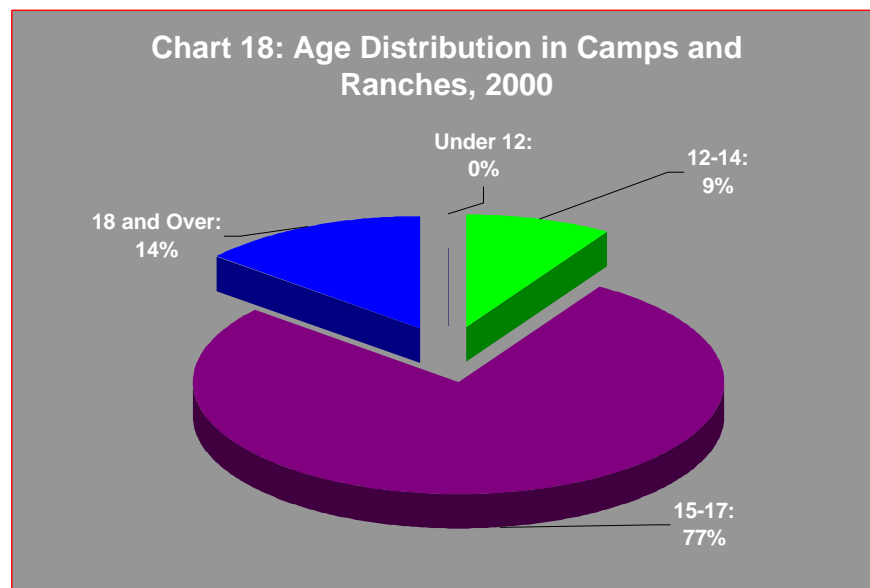
Both those juveniles charged with a 707 (b) WIC offense, and those found unfit decreased moderately from 1999 to 2000. This finding is interesting given that felony charges outweigh misdemeanor charges among juveniles, and many people believe that violent juvenile crime is on the rise. Close examination of these two identifiers will need to continue over the next few years.

Juveniles believed to be illegal/criminal aliens remained the same over the two years. It is anticipated that there will not be much fluctuation in this figure in the coming years.

Age Distribution in Custody



As shown above, the majority of juveniles in juvenile halls are between 15 and 17 years of age. This figure for 2000 is equal to the percentage in 1999. Between the two years, the 18 and over range increased by only 1%, to 13%, and exchanged that 1% with the 12 to 14 age range. Those between the ages of 12 to 14 were 16% in 1999, and decreased to 15% in 2000.

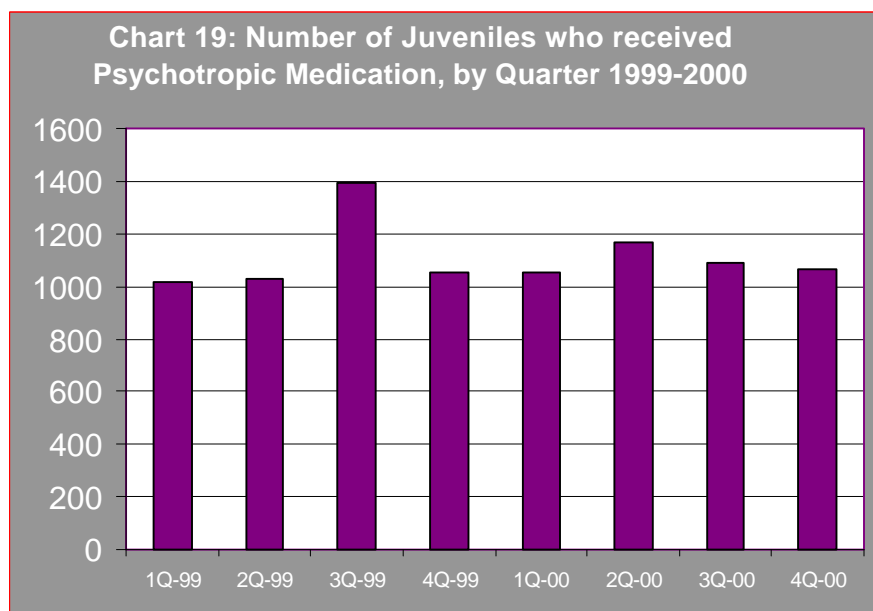


Similar to juvenile halls, the greatest number of juveniles in camps and ranches are between 15 and 17 years of age. This figure decreased slightly from 1999, from 78% to 77% in 2000. In camps and ranches, however, the distribution of 12 to 14 years of age and 18 and over is not as equal. More juveniles 18 or over are detained in camps and ranches than those 12 to 14 years of age. This is presumably due to programming within camps and ranches. The number of juveniles 18 and over increased from 12% in 1999 to 14% in 2000. The number of juveniles 12 to 14 decreased at the same time, from 10% in 1999 to 9% in 2000.

Mental Health Items

An alarming trend that has begun in juvenile detention systems is the number of juveniles who require mental health services. An estimated 4% of the juvenile detention population in California is believed to need mental health services, and this is a conservative figure.

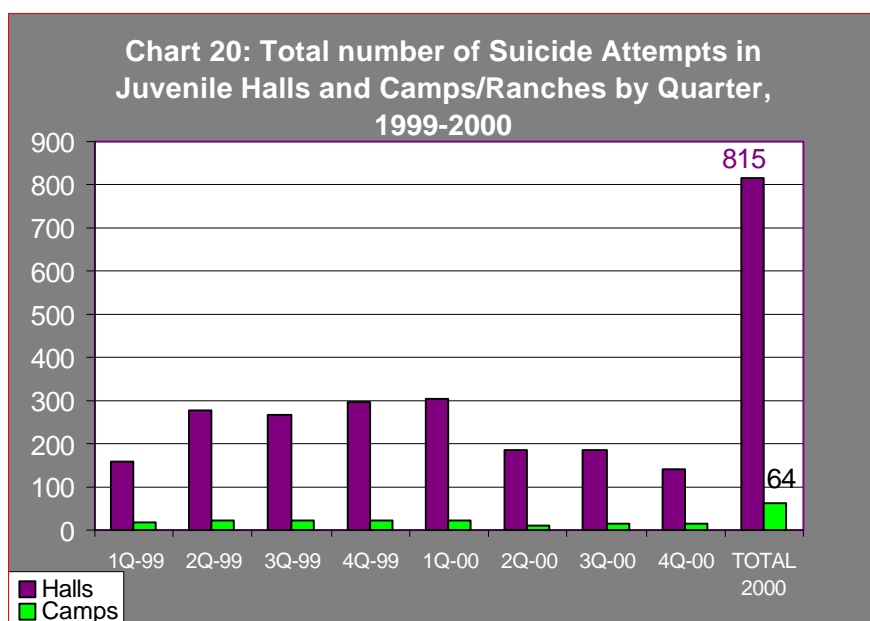
One way to measure the number of juveniles needing and subsequently receiving mental health services is to count how many are receiving psychotropic medication. The JDPS asks each county for a snapshot figure for juveniles receiving psychotropic medication each quarter. Chart 19 illustrates those numbers, by quarter over the past two years.



Except for a huge spike in the 3rd Quarter of 1999, when 1,396 juveniles received psychotropic medication, the number of juveniles receiving psychotropic medication has been increasing somewhat steadily over the years. There is no indication that this number will decrease dramatically, as it reached 1,075 in the 4th Quarter of 2000. The BOC is currently investigating methods of better tracking the number of juveniles receiving psychotropic medication in juvenile detention settings, as well as looking into alternative methods of measuring the actual mental health needs of juveniles in custody.

Attempted Suicide

For purposes of the JDPS, attempted suicide means the juvenile endeavored to commit suicide as measured by the facility initiating a suicide watch. It does not include juveniles identified as suicidal because of notice on admission or prior history. During 2000, the total number of attempted suicides reported by counties was 878, 814 of which occurred in juvenile halls, and 64 that occurred in camps and ranches. In 2000, there was one suicide in a juvenile hall. Chart 20 compares the number of suicide attempts according to the various detention settings between 1999 and 2000.



Camps historically have less suicide attempts within their settings. This could be due to the fact that the juvenile's initial entrance into the juvenile detention system is usually a major trigger of suicide attempts. Once a juvenile has been sentenced to, and transferred to a camp or ranch, the trauma of first entering the system usually has subsided. This is not to say that once a juvenile has been sentenced to a camp or ranch, their suicidal feelings are definitely going to subside, but it certainly decreases the risk.

The number of suicide attempts seems to have decreased somewhat from 1999 to 2000. The 4th Quarter of 2000 recorded the lowest number of attempts since the inception of the JDPS at 160. This trend is certainly positive, and will be scrutinized in the future.

Assaults on Staff

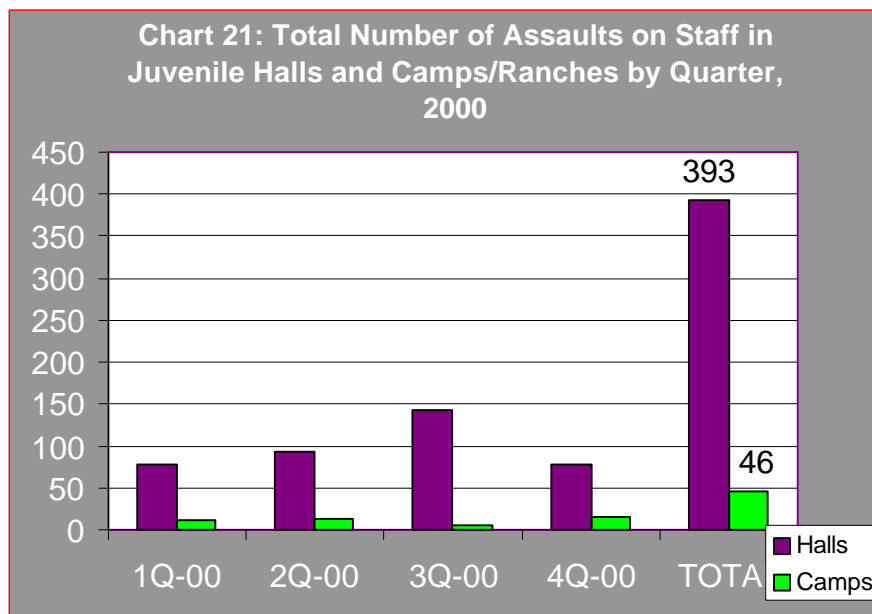


Chart 21 illustrates the number of assaults on staff that juveniles committed during 2000. The JDPS collects cumulative information on the number of assaults on staff by juveniles. Counties reported the total number of instances in which a juvenile in one of the detention settings, physically assaulted and/or committed battery against a staff member on a quarterly basis. The data include only those instances of assault and/or battery that resulted in an incident report and/or charges being referred to the District Attorney.

During the entire year of 2000, counties reported a total of 439 assaults on staff by juveniles. As shown in Chart 21, assaults on staff are more likely to occur in juvenile halls than in camps or other detention settings. The total number of juvenile assaults on staff for 2000 is 57% lower than in 1999. This is a very encouraging statistic, and it is hoped to continue.

Escapes

The JDPS collects cumulative information on the numbers of escapes by juveniles from county detention settings. Counties reported the total number of instances in which a juvenile left the control and custody of one of the juvenile detention settings without authorization, on a quarterly basis. This includes fleeing from the detention setting, fleeing from a staff member while outside the detention facility, and failing to return from a furlough. The reported data exclude incidents in which a juvenile left and returned, and no formal action was taken.

During 2000, counties reported a total of 1,115 escapes for the entire year. This number is almost equal to those reported in 1999. As shown in Chart 22, escapes were more likely to occur from camps than other detention settings.

